

THE GREAT CARTOONS OF THE CENTURY

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Winter 1973
Then & Now

**32 WAYS
TO MAKE A
MILLION
DOLLARS**

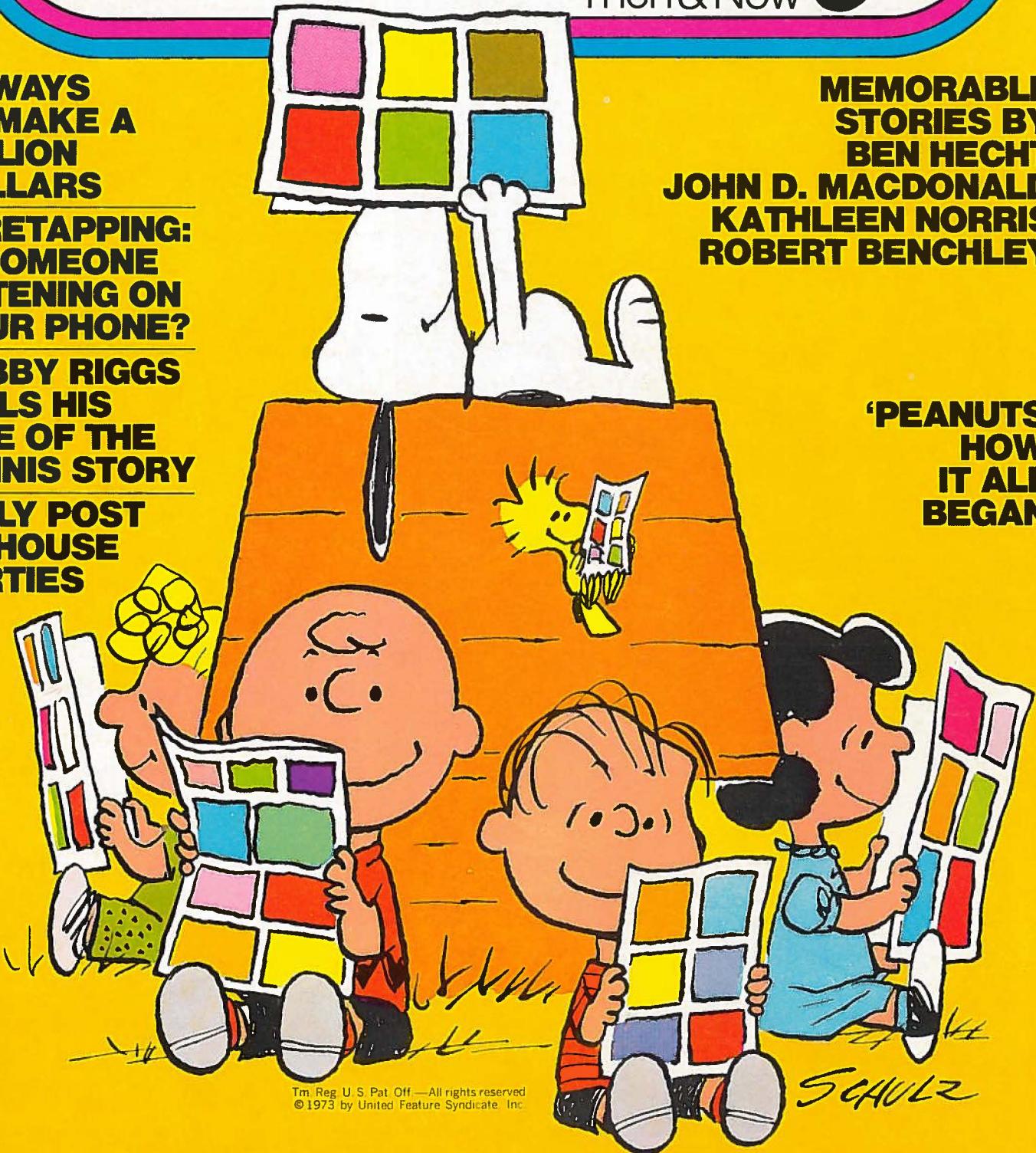
**WIRETAPPING:
IS SOMEONE
LISTENING ON
YOUR PHONE?**

**BOBBY RIGGS
TELLS HIS
SIDE OF THE
TENNIS STORY**

**EMILY POST
ON HOUSE
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**MEMORABLE
STORIES BY
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**'PEANUTS'—
HOW
IT ALL
BEGAN**



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SCHULZ

COLLECTOR'S SERIES
(See Centerfold)



'PEANUTS'- HOW IT ALL BEGAN

By **CHARLES M. SCHULZ**

When I was growing up, the three main forms of entertainment were the Saturday afternoon serials at the movie houses, the late afternoon radio programs, and the comic strips. My dad was always a great comic strip reader, and he and I made sure that we always bought all four of the Sunday newspapers published in St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota. I grew up with only one real career desire in life—and that was someday to draw my own comic strip.

Naturally, I was also a Walt Disney fan and could draw quite faithfully Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, the three little pigs, and all of the other great Disney characters. I was also much impressed by Popeye and used to decorate the covers of my school books with drawings of that fabulous character. With me, it was not a matter of how I became a cartoonist, but merely a matter of when. I am quite sure that if I had not sold "Peanuts" when I did, that I would have sold something eventually, and that even to this day, if I had not yet sold something, I would continue to draw because I had to.

During the last year I was in high school, I began to take a correspondence course with Art Instruction School, which is located in Minneapolis. I completed their course in two years and then began to submit cartoons as all young boys do, but with no success. It was not until I returned from World War II that I made my first sale of some kid cartoons to our local newspaper in St. Paul. I also was finally able to break through in the Saturday Evening Post with about fifteen gag cartoons. And then one day in 1949 I sold "Peanuts" to United Feature Syndicate.

This is how it all happened, and if I look back upon it now, it all seems relatively simple. But I imagine this is because memory has a way of knocking off the corners.

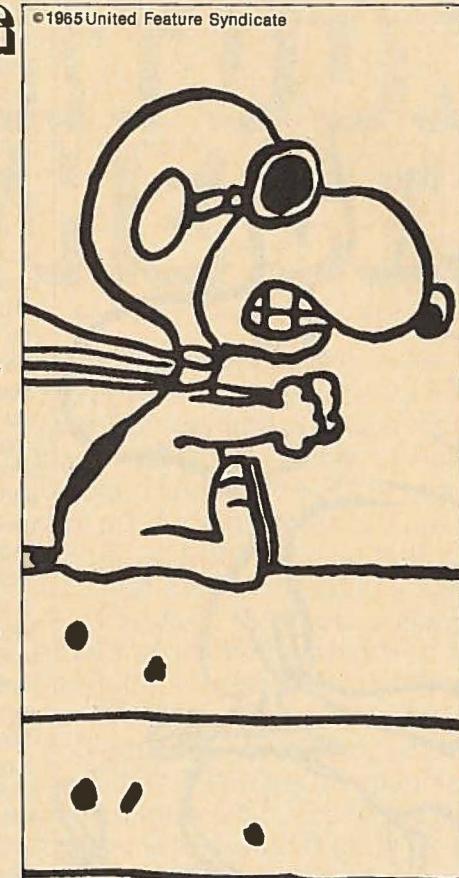
ON CARTOONING

There is no doubt in my mind that drawing a comic strip simply has to be the best job in the world. People send you wonderful letters, the syndicate for which you work sends you enough money to live on, and you are allowed to draw all of the pictures that you have been wanting to draw ever since you were a little kid. You also are given an outlet for all of your emotions. From a practical standpoint, this is extremely important, for every emotion that you have, plus every experience and bit of knowledge which you have acquired, go into the creation of a comic strip.

A cartoonist really possesses a unique combination of talents. Actually, it does you no good to be able to draw too well or to become too educated. I have frequently referred to the comic strip as a sidewalk medium. By this I mean that the comic strip appeals to just plain people. However, if it is handled in the proper manner, a comic strip can burst these traditional bounds and appeal also to people who are better educated and are fortunate enough to have a more cultured background. To do this, the cartoonist himself need not be extremely educated or cultured but he must possess that rarest of all commodities—plain common sense.

For those who are trying to get into the business, I would like to assure you that there is no "catch" to it. There is no definite series of steps which you have to take and you certainly do not have to have an "in" some place. All you have to do is be able to draw a comic strip which is better than any other now running. I do not even think that you have to worry about taking the strip to New York or wherever the syndicate may be located, because I am quite sure that submissions through the mail are

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"Snoopy is a very contradictory character. In a way he's quite selfish. He likes to think of himself as independent, and he has dreams of doing great things. Without Charlie Brown he couldn't survive, but Snoopy won't even give Charlie Brown the love and affection he deserves. That's part of the humor."

examined just as carefully. When you submit through the mail you give the editorial director the added advantage of being able to study your work at his leisure.

The best bit of advice that I can give anyone is never to be caught without at least one iron in the fire. By this I mean you should always have something in the mail working for you. As soon as you complete a dozen gag cartoon roughs and send them off to a magazine, you should forget about them and begin to work on a newspaper feature. If it is a comic strip, as soon as you complete two or three weeks' material, mail it off to a syndicate and once again, forget about it. Immediately set to work on a panel feature, for instance, and then send that off while you are creating more gag cartoons. Always have something in the mail which is working for you. Also, do not ignore the minor markets such as your church publications or any small newspapers which may be published in your own home town. Do not make the most terrible mistake of all, which is to think that you will not give these minor publications your best work. In the first place, you will be robbing them of what they deserve from you, and in the second place, the ideas that you have now which you think are so good that they have to be saved or protected for better publications may not seem that good several years later. You will be surprised how much your ideas improve as you grow older. The ability to draw is not the only ability which improves with time. The ability to create ideas improves as you yourself mature.

Editor's Note: We thought you'd like to know about the great success story of "Peanuts."

What could be more American than the funnies? Sunday morning . . . sleeping late . . . the family haggling good-naturedly over who gets what part of the paper. One thing was certain. Whatever Mom and Dad might read—the funnies belonged to the kids.

Not any more. Not for the last

"Charlie Brown is a caricature. We all know what it's like to lose, but Charlie Brown keeps losing outrageously. It's not that he's a loser; he's really a decent little sort. But nothing seems to work out right."

quarter-century. Not since Charles Monroe Schulz first created "Peanuts." Virtually single-handedly, the man everyone calls Sparky transformed the funnies into an institution. And they're still funny.

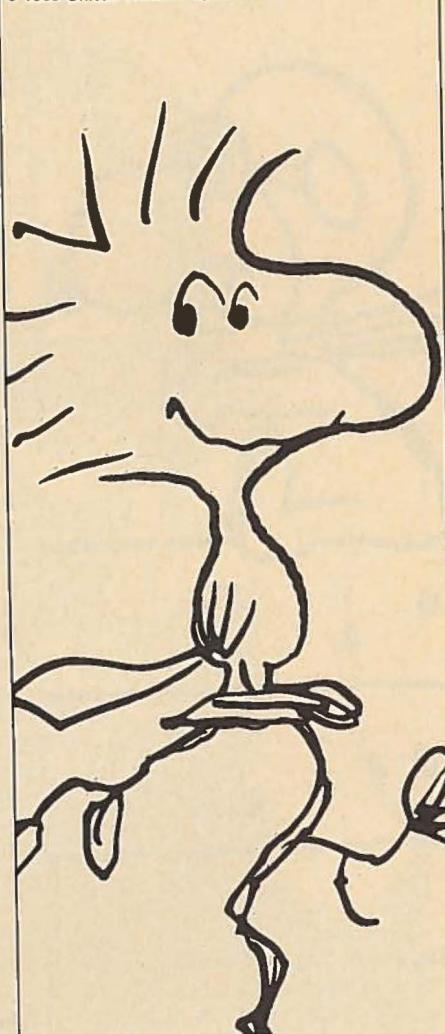
Peanuts has invaded our daily lives. Adults, teenagers, children—we all seem to recognize ourselves in Charlie Brown, Lucy, Linus, and Snoopy. Perhaps it's because their creator himself identifies so strongly with them. "It's kind of embarrassing sometimes," says Schulz, "that a hundred million people are reading each day about the dumb things I did as a kid. Most of the things I write about in Peanuts come from my own childhood experiences."

Many young boys doodle and draw and dream of a career in art but Sparky succeeded—in a spectacular fashion. Peanuts is unparalleled in comic strip history. In 1950 United Feature Syndicate introduced it in eight newspapers across the country. Today, it is printed in nineteen languages, has a daily and Sunday circulation of more than 1,200 newspapers around the world—and a readership of sixty million.

Apart from the phenomenal success of the strip itself, Peanuts has become the center of a vast commercial empire, with an annual national gross of \$150 million. Scores of hard- and soft-cover books featuring the characters have become major best-sellers. The Peanuts gang has leaped off the page to animate television specials, feature-length films, and musical plays. The seven television specials alone have grossed nearly \$5 million, and new ones are planned. The musical stage hit played 1,500 performances off and on Broadway. Nine road companies have toured the nation.

The licensing of Peanuts products has become a gigantic business in itself. To date, the commercial off-

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"Woodstock is Snoopy's friend and confidant. He just worships Snoopy and would do anything for him, even type his letters for him."

shoots include more than thirty companies licensed to sell hundreds of items—from Charlie Brown sweat shirts and baseball caps to Lucy dolls and Woodstock tie clips. The list is

seemingly endless—gift items, jewelry, wastebaskets, beach gear. There are stuffed dolls, greeting cards, and posters. There is even a complete line of Peanuts bed sheets, pillow cases, and towels.

It is the characters, of course, that are the secret of Peanuts' appeal. There is Lucy, the quintessential fuss-budget, with an outspoken opinion about everything; Linus Van Pelt, her younger brother, who is never without his security blanket; Schroeder, the piano-playing prodigy whose idol is Beethoven; Snoopy, the preposterously philosophical beagle; and finally, there is Charlie Brown, vulnerable, a perennial failure who never accepts defeat. Both touching and wise, these cartoon children have become as familiar as old friends.

Schulz' primary concern continues to be the strip. The world's most popular and successful cartoonist, he remains a gentle, unpretentious man. A millionaire, who receives 50 percent of the income from the strip and 2.5 percent of the gross of all the licensed products, he employs no assistants and draws and letters each strip personally.

Schulz feels a responsibility to his readers—and to himself—to maintain the high quality of Peanuts. Though aware of occasional accusations of commercialism, he is not overly concerned. "People feel so strongly about the characters [that] they fear that someone is going to do something to destroy them. I have always contended that as long as I continued to do all the drawing on the newspaper feature myself, we do not have to worry too much about this. Features of this kind go downhill when they have become too big for one man to handle and he begins to have other people do the work for him." This is something Schulz hasn't done in twenty-three years. He doesn't intend to start now. □

Charles M. Schulz—"I'm a born cartoonist. Why do musicians compose symphonies and poets write poems? They do it because life wouldn't have any meaning for them if they didn't. That's why I draw cartoons. It's my life."